

SUMMARY
HLC Self-Study Steering Committee
September 28th, 2005—3-4pm—Student Union Building, Room 318

Present: Drs. Deb Blake, Stu Hilwig, Barbara Medina, Teri McCartney, David Svaldi, Guy Farish, Mary Breslin, Sandra Starnaman, and Frank Novotny. Mr. Mark Schoenecker, Ms. Julie Waechter, Mrs. Di Machado, Mr. Bill Mansheim, Mr. Ken Marquez, Ms. Barb Friese, Mr. Mike Nicholson, and Mr. Paul Tigan

- I. The meeting began at approximately 3pm. Dr. Farish introduced Dr. Mary Breslin of the Higher Learning Commission. The steering committee introduced itself to Dr. Mary Breslin.
- II. Mark Schoenecker showed the “Get on Board” slideshow that was featured at the opening meeting this fall.
 - a. Dr. Farish explained the background for the theme and how it was chosen.
- III. Questions and Answers with Dr. Breslin
 - a. Dr. Farish opened up the table for discussion regarding the accreditation process. Questions, issues, concerns?
 - i. The Focus of the Self-Study as a Future-Oriented Document—What’s the balance?
 1. The introduction to the Self-Study should set the stage about where ASC is coming from, what the previous accreditation visit and intermediate visits gave us as goals to improve.
 2. It is important that we show how we addressed the issues brought up by the last accreditation team.
 3. From there, move into the new Criteria
 - a. Address all the points in each Criterion
 - b. This must be evaluative, not just descriptive.
 - c. Don’t just say what you have; explain how it impacts the college and the delivery of the education.
 - ii. Resources and the New Criteria
 1. The 4th and 5th Criteria were developed out of a perceived gap in the last set of Criteria.
 - a. The HLC is interested in seeing how we tackle these Criteria—they are new for them as well, and so each school shows them something new.
 - i. It’s important to show how we as an institution identify our constituents.
 - ii. How does that process inform how we serve them? How do we serve them?
 - iii. Once you define these, make your case to the HLC.
 - b. It’s important that the team from the HLC doesn’t surprise you. Why?
 - i. It means you ignored something
 - ii. You willfully covered something up
 - iii. You just weren’t looking at it
 - iv. Make sure we are:

1. Honest
 2. Open
 3. Broad (use many partners in all aspects of the process)
 - v. This will ensure we see everything and avoid being surprised.
- iii. How to react to Examples of Criteria given by HLC
1. Don't contort the institution to fit the limited examples given by the HLC.
 2. Use the examples that are yours—make sure they are as unique as the college
 3. Make sure they are future-oriented.
- iv. What should the Self-Study physically look like?
1. The Self-Study should be a self-contained, stand-alone document
 - a. There is definitely room to add supplemental evidence to the web-page, etc., but the document itself should be able to speak for the process as a whole.
 - i. Use examples judiciously!
 - b. ASC should plainly make the case for re-accreditation.
 - c. Use margins of pages to draw clear connections between different criteria, similarities that wouldn't otherwise stand out.
- v. What will the Team Report look like?
1. The team report is available on the web.
 - a. It is broke down into two sections
 - i. Assurance
 - ii. Assessment
 2. Individual team members are given different assignments and parts of the college to review during the visit.
 3. They rate each element of the visit in one of four ways:
 - a. Meets Criteria
 - b. Does not Meet Criteria Completely
 - c. Does not Meet Criteria Completely, Commission needs to watch
 - d. "The fourth? Let's not talk about it, it won't happen."
- vi. What Happens when parts of the Self-Study overlap?
1. It's okay and expected.
 2. When you cover old ground, try and look at it from a new perspective (from the Criterion you are writing about).
 3. Don't feel like you have to restate things that have been said previously.
 4. Using a data matrix to show overlap between departments, criterion, etc. is a good idea
 5. The web should be used to show these connections as well. Use hyperlinks to allow evaluators to bounce back and forth between different sections of the report.
 6. Cross-Cutting Themes? Not mentioned at meeting but should be considered.
- vii. Concerns about Criterion III: Assessment

1. This is going to be a major concern of the evaluating team because of ASC's past performance in this area.
 2. It is critical that the college sees both sides of the picture when it comes to assessment.
 - a. Data Gathering is not assessment
 - b. Reviewing Institutional Advancement is not assessment
 - c. Institutional Syllabi, Curriculum Review Committee, etc. are not, in and of themselves, assessment.
 - d. Effective and real assessment is the "feedback loop"—the process of analyzing how changes have improved student learning through direct and indirect analysis.
 3. Analyzing the budget to see how it affects student learning is a type of assessment. However, do not use the academic language of assessment when you speak of analyzing the effectiveness of the business office. It is Very important not to confuse the two by using similar terminology.
 - a. Do connect how budget issues affect student learning (the microscope example).
 4. How do you find out if your students actually learned?
 - a. Do you ask graduate schools if your students are properly prepared?
 - b. Do you ask employers?
 - c. Do you ask the students themselves?
- viii. The General Education Requirement
1. There is consistent concern about what the HLC will think of our general education program.
 2. The State of Colorado mandates a certain general education system that ties the college's hands and cuts out options
 - a. Dr. Breslin responded that the HLC will take this into consideration and give the college some lee-way for the General Education concerns.
- ix. Leadership Changes
1. The most important thing to remember is that they happen.
 2. Dr. Breslin relayed a story from when she was a consultant evaluator where the campus appeared to be imploding during the site visit itself.
 - a. In the grand scheme, ASC's leadership situation is rather mild.
 - b. The evaluators understand this, as does the HLC.
 - c. The most important thing is to not let it affect learning in the classroom.
 3. Another key is making sure that the focus stays on the future. If there is a perception of gravitas that isn't justified, then the leadership of the campus must make sure to align the perceptions of the situation with its reality.
 4. As with everything, don't ignore it and it can't hurt you.
- b. Dr. Breslin closed with some encouraging remarks about the Self-Study process
- i. ASC will learn a lot about itself if it is open to the process.
 - ii. We should look forward to it as a community-building, eye-opening experience.
 - iii. The 10-year accreditation cycle is history.

1. This self-study should serve as the starting point for a permanent committee that concerns itself with campus assessment and improvement.
- iv. Good Luck!